

MONTANA CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY CENTER POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Policy Subject: Belonging Search and Safekeeping of Unauthorized Items	
Policy Number: CTP 14	Standards/Statutes: ARM 37.27.121.130
Effective Date: 01/01/02	Page 1 of 2

PURPOSE: To define items not allowed in the possession of patients.

POLICY: Patients are not allowed to possess specific items including but not limited to the following:

UNAUTHORIZED ITEMS

- Medications, including over-the-counter items.
- Food and beverages brought in from home.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Toiletry items that contain alcohol, unless approved by a supervisor.
- Drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Aerosol containers.
- Colognes and perfumes.
- Electronic equipment, including radios, TV's, cassette or CD players, laptop computers, hand held games, cell phones.
- Reading material except AA books, self-help books, and bibles.
- Car keys.
- Camera, musical instruments.
- Hobby items including playing cards, cribbage boards, sewing items.
- Bleach.
- Weapons.
- Lighter fluid.
- Smokeless tobacco, i.e. Copenhagen, etc.

PROCEDURE:

- I. At the time of admission, the patient's belongings will be placed in a designated area until a thorough search of the belongings is completed. This procedure is the responsibility of the nursing/TS staff and is always completed in the presence of the patient. The patient will not have access to their belongings or be allowed to put their belongings in their room until the search is completed.
- II. For safety reasons, it is recommended that the staff completing the clothing search wear gloves.

The staff member should never just blindly reach into a patient's bag, suitcase, purse, etc. Instead, the staff should ask the patient to remove items from the baggage so that a visible examination of the container can be completed. If necessary, reaching hands in to a suitcase, purse, etc. should only be done when there is a clear view of the surroundings.

- III. It is important that pockets of items of clothing that the patient is currently wearing, including the coat, be a part of the clothing search. Again, the staff should not blindly reach into a patient's pockets.
- IV. If a weapon is found during the clothing search, follow the procedure outlined in the Weapon's Policy, Policy # ADP 11.
- V. A complete inventory of all unauthorized items will be documented on the Patient Belongings Form. The patient and the staff will sign and date the form. If nothing is taken away, this should be noted on the form. The form is placed in the patient's chart as a part of their permanent record.
- VI. The unauthorized items will be placed in a properly identified bag. The bag will be sealed and placed in the designated locked storage areas on the appropriate floor. If the item is too large for bagging, a patient identifier will be taped on the item, and the item will be placed in locked storage.
- VII. Medications removed from the patient's possession will be either placed in locked storage or if the medication is in a properly labeled prescription bottle and is ordered by the physician, the medication may be placed in the patient's medication drawer for dispensing while at MCDC.
- VIII. At the time of discharge, the belongings taken away from the patient will be returned. The patient should examine what is returned and sign the Patient Belonging Form, indicating that all items have been returned.
- IX. In the event that a patient leaves MCDC without retrieving their belongings from locked storage, the items will be retained at MCDC for 30 days. If the patient does not inquire about having the items returned to them within 30 days post-discharge, then the items will be disposed of. If the patient does inquire about having the items returned, it is the responsibility of the patient to pay for all shipping charges.

Revisions: _____

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